



State of California  
The Natural Resources Agency  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	La Cima Conservation Camp Emergency Access Road Repair Project		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	15108 Sunrise Highway Julian, CA 92036 N1/2 of SW1/4, Section 23, T14S, R4E, SBBM	<b>COUNTY</b>	San Diego
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Pete Scully CAL FIRE – Monte Vista Headquarters		
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Pre-Fire/Resource Management Office 2249 Jamacha Rd El Cajon, CA 92019	<b>PHONE</b>	(619) 743-5530

This project proposes the removal of a failed 36-inch primary galvanized pipe and a 16-inch secondary galvanized pipe located above the 36-inch pipe. The failed pipes will be replaced with one new 48-inch galvanized steel pipe. Due to the pipe failure and subsequent erosion, other necessary repairs will include: the roadway section, outflow of the pipe and the shoulder of the roadway. Work includes removal of an 8-foot-wide by 40-foot-long section of damaged asphalt road surface with spoils to be retained and reutilized at facility, removal of approximately 30 yards of soil, removal of existing failed 36-inch and 16-inch culverts, removal of damaged outfall head wall with natural rocks from head wall to be reutilized. Placement of new 48-inch culvert in two 20-foot sections with transit mix concrete seal to be poured in place, compaction of excavated soils around newly placed 48-inch culvert to 8-inches below existing road surface. Placement of 8-inch thick cement cap to existing road surface elevation to replace excavated portion of roadway requiring 8 yards of concrete and installation of concrete with salvaged rock façade placed on headwall requiring 2 yards of concrete.

All work will be performed by CAL FIRE employees and camp crews using CAL FIRE equipment including hand operated tools, front loader, and a rental excavator.

La Cima Conservation Camp is located at 15108 Sunrise Highway, approximately 4.25 miles southeast of the unincorporated community of Cuyamaca in San Diego County. The project site is located on land owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation and leased to CAL FIRE and consists of: A CAL FIRE/CDC office building, officer's sleeping quarters, Inmate barracks, kitchen/mess hall, automotive shop, crew vehicle storage building, fuel house and warehouse and other small support structures. The surrounding environmental setting is comprised of steep, mountainous terrain, in montane chaparral with isolated stands of mixed conifer forest. La Cima Camp is in a rural area with controlled public access, and is accessed by a private road three miles from the Sunrise Highway.

### EXEMPTION STATUS

- |                                     |   |                             |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Categorical Exemption                         | Type/Section: Class 1 and 4 | 15301, Existing Facilities       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Statutory Exemption (state code section):     |                             | 15304, Minor Alterations to Land |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)             |                             |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))   |                             |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)) |                             |                                  |

### REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT


This project is contained within the descriptions of two Categorical Exemptions listed in the CEQA Guidelines: Class 1 pertaining to repair of existing facilities, and Class 4 pertaining to minor alterations to land. After completing an environmental analysis, the Department has determined this project will have no significant impact on the environment. This determination is based on field assessments, a CNDDDB search, greenhouse gas emission calculations, and archaeological review completed by CAL FIRE Archaeological staff.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is retained on file at CAL FIRE MVU Headquarters in El Cajon.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUL 25 2019  
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

  
Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director  
Resource Protection and Improvement  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Date

7/24/19

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## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

### Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report form is intended for use by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a Notice of Exemption (NOE) document for a proposed CAL FIRE project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable Categorical Exemptions, this report presents CAL FIRE's review for possible "Exceptions" that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the Department.

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**Project Name:** La Cima Conservation Camp Emergency Access Road Repair  
**Project Number:** MVU-2019-004  
**Program Type:** Existing Facilities  
**CAL FIRE Unit:** MVU  
**County:** San Diego  
**Acres (miles):**  
**Legal Location:** Rancho Cuyamaca Spanish Land Grant, Projected as N1/4 of Se 1/4, Sec 14, T14S, R4E, SBBM  
**Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s):** Cuyamaca Peak

#### Other Public Agency Review/Permit Required:

Would the project result in:

- alterations to a watercourse (DFG - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)
- conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)
- demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)
- soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)
- fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)
- other:

YES

NO

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Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:

#### Project Description and Environmental Setting (Describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):

During the winter of 2019, a culvert crossing failure occurred 2.7 miles in on the main access road to CAL FIRE's La Cima Conservation Camp. This project proposes the removal of a failed 36-inch primary galvanized pipe and a 16-inch secondary galvanized pipe located above the 36-inch pipe. The failed pipes will be replaced with one new 48-inch galvanized steel pipe. Due to the pipe failure and subsequent erosion, other necessary repairs will include: the roadway section, outflow of the pipe and the shoulder of the roadway.

#### Proposed project activities include:

- Saw cut and remove 8-foot-wide by 40-foot-long section of damaged asphalt road surface with spoils to be retained and reutilized at facility.
- Removal of approximately 30 yards of soil to expose damaged culverts and prepare bedding for replacement culvert.
- Removal of existing failed 36-inch and 16-inch culverts with retention of first 12 inches out from headwall to facilitate connection to replacement culvert.
- Removal of damaged outfall head wall with natural rocks from head wall to be reutilized.
- Placement of new 48-inch culvert in two 20-foot sections banded together with tie in system to both existing culvert inlets through use of adapter with transit mix concrete seal to be poured in place over and around all culvert connections and joints requiring 11 yards of concrete.
- Return of excavated soils around newly placed 48-inch culvert to 8-inches below existing road surface, soils to be compacted utilizing mechanized compactors.
- Placement of 8-inch thick cement cap to existing road surface elevation to replace excavated portion of roadway requiring 8 yards of concrete.
- Installation of concrete downstream headwall and riprap spillway with salvaged rock façade placed on headwall requiring 2 yards of concrete.

All work will be performed by CAL FIRE employees and camp crews using CAL FIRE equipment including hand operated tools, front loader, and a rental excavator.

La Cima Conservation Camp is located at 15108 Sunrise Highway, approximately 4.25 miles southeast of the unincorporated community of Cuyamaca in San Diego County. The project site is located on land owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation and leased to CAL FIRE and consists of: A CAL FIRE/CDC office building, officer's sleeping quarters, Inmate barracks, kitchen/mess hall, automotive shop, crew vehicle storage building, fuel house and warehouse and other small support structures. The surrounding environmental setting is comprised of steep, mountainous terrain, in montane chaparral with isolated stands of mixed conifer forest. La Cima Camp is in a rural area with controlled public access, and is accessed by a private road three miles from the Sunrise Highway.

## Environmental Impact Analysis

### Aesthetics

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project involves the replacement of a failed existing 36-inch and 16-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed. These activities will not be visible to the public due to the remote location, will not significantly alter the existing view, and therefore, will have no significant impact to the public's aesthetic view. The ground disturbance resulting from the trenching and underground tank installation will be backfilled and remaining soils will be compacted. Eventually the new contours will diminish into the landscape over time. Based on the above it has been determined this project will not have significant impact on aesthetics.

### Agriculture and Forest Resources

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds and compliance with FPRs.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land/timberland to non-forest use?  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This area does not meet the definition of timberland under the California Forest Practice Rules. There will be no impact to agriculture or forest resources because of this project.

### Air Quality

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ Yes ☐ No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project involves the replacement of failed existing 36-inch and 16-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed. Movement, replacement and compaction of soils to facilitate the above, will create a potential for dust production. To avoid the possibility of dust generation and to ensure proper compaction, water will be on site and appropriately applied whenever soil disturbance takes place. CAL FIRE owned mechanized fuel powered equipment will be used to facilitate this project. This includes staff vehicles, Crew carrying vehicles, dump truck a diesel loader, and diesel powered rental excavator. The project will take approximately five days to complete. The limited duration and limited use of construction equipment will not create a significant impact on air quality.

**Biological Resources**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
- ☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current NDDDB review completed? Results discussed below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A query of CDFW's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) ArcGIS 10.1, BIOS, and RareFind 5 data was conducted on July 11, 2019. Species identified through the CNDDDB included plants (CNPS List 1B and higher) and animals (Federal and State listed and special status species) that occur within .5 miles of the project boundaries and surrounding area. The results of this search yielded 2 species of plant and 1 species of reptile outside the project boundaries but within the .5-mile buffer. The results of this search and the biological assessment for any of these species to be potentially impacted by this project are included in the attached Table 1: Biological Assessment for La Cima Conservation Camp Emergency Access Road Repair Project, San Diego County, CA. Based on these findings and due to all work taking place on previously disturbed areas within existing paved road bed completely void of vegetation, CAL FIRE staff determined that adverse impacts to any biological resources are unlikely to occur because of this project.

Table 1: Biological Assessment for La Cima Conservation Camp Emergency Access Road Repair Project, San Diego County, CA.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	CDFW Status	CA Rare Plant Rank	Habitat	Analysis
Plants	<i>Poa atropurpurea</i>	San Bernardino blue grass	None	None	None	1B,2	Mesic meadows of open pine forests and grassy slopes, loamy alluvial to sandy loam soil. 1255-2655 m.	Project is within existing paved road bed. Preferred habitat not present in project area. No impact expected
	<i>Sphenopholis obtusata</i>	prairie wedge grass		None	None	2B,2	Open moist sites, along rivers and springs, alkaline desert seeps, 15-2625 m. Cismontane woodland Meadow & seep Wetland	Project is within existing paved road bed. Preferred habitat not present in project area. No impacts expected.
Animals	<i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>	Coast horned lizard	None	None	SSC	NA	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Coastal bluff scrub, Coastal scrub, Desert wash, Pinon & Juniper woodlands, Riparian scrub, Riparian woodlands, Valley & foothill grasslands	Project is within existing paved road bed. Preferred habitat not present in project area. No impact expected

**Geology and Soils**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project does not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong ground shaking, ground failure or landslides. La Cima Conservation Camp is not located near a fault zone and is identified as a moderate to low shake area in the event of an earthquake. In addition, the project area is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable or that would become unstable as a result of the proposed project, nor will the project have an impact with regard to expansive soils. The removal and replacement of the culverts and re-construction of outfall headwall will require temporary soil disturbance. CAL FIRE will ensure that proper storm water Best Management Practices (BMP's) are implemented to avoid any erosion during project construction. The project will not result in significant impacts on geology or soils.

**Cultural Resources**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:  
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a CAL FIRE Staff or Contract Archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:  
☒ Yes ☐ No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:  
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project effect any historic buildings or archaeological site?  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

An archaeological survey of the immediate project area and for 100-feet outside project area was conducted by CAL FIRE staff on July 11, 2019 and yielded negative results. No evidence of prehistoric activity was observed within the project boundaries or adjacent areas. Though not significant, the culvert support structures including headwalls, approach water channel and outfall wall were determined to be historic. The project proposes to leave these structures intact. Appropriate site records were completed and will be filed with the South Coastal data center by qualified Unit staff. Staff, in consultation with CAL FIRE Senior State Archaeologist, Larrynn Carver, have determined that the project would have no significant impacts to cultural resources based on the negative results of the survey conducted by staff and project avoidance of historic structure. A letter dated July 16, 2019 has been placed in the project file detailing these findings.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

GHG emissions calculations were based on estimates of total fossil fuel consumption by motorized equipment required for facilitation of this project. Estimates were based on high end usage projections. Conversion factors utilized were obtained from the California Climate Action Register (CCAR) General Reporting Protocol (CCAR 2009). The Results are detailed below: Total CO<sub>2</sub>e produced under the scope of this project this will result in net release of 5.89 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

Green House Gas Emissions (GHG) Calculation Worksheet			
	MILES	MPG	GAL. OF FUEL
Staff vehicle - Gas	2800	15	186.66
Crew Vehicle - Diesel	25	10	2.50
Dump Truck-Diesel	25	10	2.50
Cement Delivery-Diesel	400	10	40.00
Material Delivery-Diesel	200	10	20.00
	HOURS	GPH	GAL. OF FUEL
Excavator- Diesel	24	8	192.00
Loader -Diesel	16	10	160.00
Hand Held Compactor - Gas	4	2	8.00
	CF	KILOGRAMS	
Total Gasoline Consumption	194.66	8.18	1592.32
Total Diesel Consumption	417.00	10.15	4232.55
Total Metric Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e - Gas	1.59		
Total Metric Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e - Diesel	4.23		
Total Metric Tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	5.89		

The significance threshold CAL FIRE used to determine significance is thresholds established by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association is 900 tons/yr. for indirect sources (combined construction and operational emissions). Based upon this threshold, impacts to greenhouse gas emissions are less than significant.

#### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project involves the replacement of a failed existing 36-inch and 18-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed and is not on or near a listed hazardous materials site, and will not result in creating a hazard to the public through the routine transport, use, or disposal of any hazardous materials or release hazardous materials into the environment. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within the vicinity of a private airstrip and will not interfere with an emergency response plan. This project will not create a significant impact with regard to hazards and hazardous materials.

#### Hydrology and Water Quality

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project involves the replacement of a failed existing 36-inch and 18-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed. All project activities will take place during dry season when no water is present in the effected seasonal drainage. No disturbance of natural drainage bed will take place and no materials will be placed in drainage. Project implementation will have no impact on local ground water tables or result in an increase in water usage. The project will not result in any additional run-off and BMP's shall be employed during project work to minimize to a less than significant level any storm water run-off or soil erosion should a heavy rain storm occur. This project will not have an effect on current or future hydrology or water quality.

#### Land Use and Planning

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will not have an effect on current or future land use and planning.

#### Mineral Resources

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will have no impacts to mineral resources.

#### Noise

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will utilize CAL FIRE and rental mechanized equipment (dump truck, loader and rental excavator) and CAL FIRE Region staff and hand crews to complete proposed work. Work will occur over a three to five-day period and noise levels are expected to be consistent with a single piece of mechanized equipment operating at any one time and is for a limited time period. Additionally, project is in a controlled location remote from any public presence or access. Once completed noise levels will return to pre-project levels. There will be no significant impacts from the noise generated by this project.

#### Population and Housing

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will have no effect on population or housing.

**Public Services**

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project involves the replacement of a failed existing 36-inch and 18-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed located within the main entrance to the La Cima Conservation Camp. Crews from this camp provide wildland firefighting support when fires occur in the geographic area. Access road disruption during proposed work may result in minor delay in crew response times. This minor delay will not have any significant impacts on wildland firefighting operations.

This project will have no adverse effects on public services.

**Recreation**

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will have no impact to recreation.

**Transportation/Traffic**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The removal and replacement of the damaged culverts and road bed repair will require Cal Fire Staff to employ a rental excavator requiring a one-time haul in and haul out. Excavator will remain on site for the duration as needed and will not generate additional trips. This project will require Cal Fire Region staff employees to commute to and from the project each day (approximately 5 working days). Project activities will require the use of CAL FIRE mechanized equipment (loader and dump truck) and hand crews to complete the proposed work. The hand crews and mechanized equipment are based at the facility and will not generate any additional trips. Concrete will be delivered via transit truck and will require travel from batch plant to site and return. All vehicles and construction equipment used during project construction would access the site via Highway 79 and Sunrise Highway. The project would not conflict with any applicable plan, or policy establishing service level standards as the transportation system has adequate capacity.

The vehicle trips created by the proposed project will not create a significant impact on transportation and traffic as the traffic generated is not substantial and is of limited duration.

**Utilities and Service Systems**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project involves the replacement of a failed existing 36-inch and 18-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed. This culvert replacement will restore the designed seasonal water flow to pre-culvert failure and will not result in any increase of storm water volume, or result in alteration of storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing ones. Net water draw from area aquifers will remain unchanged. This project will have no impact on existing municipal utilities or services.

**Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:**

Best management practices, including dust abatement and erosion control devices consistent with minor soil disturbance have been incorporated into the design of this project. There are no known cultural or biological concerns present within the project area.



**Mandatory Findings of Significance:****YES NO**

(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

☐ ☒

(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects)

☐ ☒

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

☐ ☒**Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):**

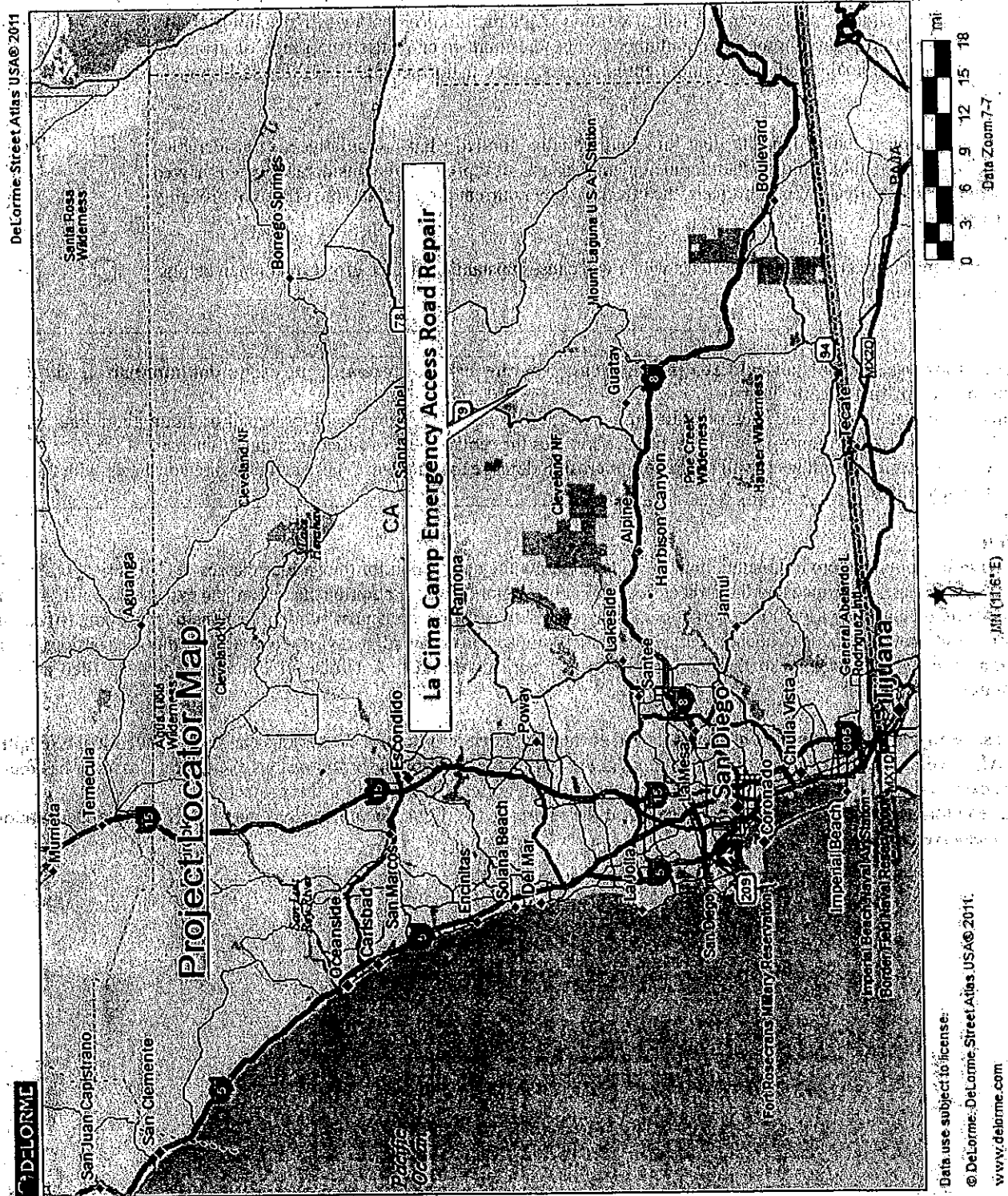
The project is consistent with two Categorical Exemptions: 15301, Class 1 Existing Facilities, repair or minor alterations, and 15304, Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land. This project involves the replacement of failed existing 36-inch and 18-inch culverts, replacement of outfall head wall and repair of erosion damage to road bed. These activities are consistent with the exemptions listed above.

**Conclusion:**

☒ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. The Department considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A Notice of Exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

☐ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site which precludes the use of a Categorical Exemption for this project.

Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration.



**Figure 1. Project Locator Map for La Cima Emergency Access Road Repair, showing general location of project within San Diego County.**